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ABSTRACT

This regional dossier aims to provide concise, descriptive information and basic educational statistics about minority language education in a specific country of the European Union--Finland. Details are provided about the features of the educational system, recent educational policies, divisions of responsibilities, main actors, legal arrangements, support structures, and qualitative information on a number of schools, teachers, pupils, and financial investments. This information is designed to serve the needs of policy makers, researchers, teachers, students, and journalists as they assess the developments in European minority language schooling. This information may also serve as a first orientation towards further research (additional readings are suggested and contact information provided). Specifically, information is provided on preschool, primary, secondary, vocational, higher, and adult education, as well as a review of educational research, summary statistics, and overall prospects for the use of the language under study. The subject of this dossier is Swedish spoken in Finland. Swedish is one of two official languages in Finland. A very large minority of Finns are Swedish-speaking, and the number of bilingual families is increasing. The Swedish-speaking population of Finland can be traced back to medieval times when Swedish farmers colonized parts of Finland, and Finland was part of Sweden for more than 600 years (until 1809). (Contains 31 references.) (KFT)

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The Swedish language in education in Finland

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● numerically small language communities

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Foreword to the regional dossiers

background

For several years now, Mercator-Education has attempted to achieve one of its principal goals: to gather, store and distribute information on minority language education in European regions. Regional or minority languages are languages which differ from the official language of that State and which are traditionally used within a given territory of that State by nationals of that State forming a group numerically smaller than the rest of the State's population.[1] To date, Mercator-Education has been successful in establishing a computerized data bank containing bibliographic data, information about persons and organisations involved with minority language issues, and data collected during four inventory studies on pre-school education (Goot, Renkema & Stuijt, 1994), primary education (Sikma & Gorter, 1991), learning materials (Tjeerdsma & Sikma, 1994) and teacher training (Dekkers, 1995). In addition there is a need for documents stating in brief the most essential features of the educational system of regions with an autochthonous lesser used language. With the establishment of regional dossiers it is intended to meet this need.

aim

Regional dossiers aim at providing concise descriptive information and basic educational statistics about minority language education in a specific region of the European Community. This kind of information, such as features of the educational system, recent educational policies, division of responsibilities, main actors, legal arrangements, support structures, and also quantitative information on the number of schools, teachers, pupils and financial investments, can serve several purposes.

target group

Policy makers, researchers, teachers, students and journalists may use the information provided to assess developments in European minority language schooling. They can also use a regional dossier as a first orientation towards further research (further reading and addresses are included) or as a source of

ideas for improving educational provision in their own region.

link with EURYDICE

In order to link these regional descriptions with those of national educational systems, it was decided to follow the format used by EURYDICE, the European education information network in the European Union. EURYDICE provides information on the administration and structure of all levels of education in Member States of the European Union.[2] The information provided in the regional dossiers is focused on language use at the various levels of education.

contents

The remainder of this dossier consists firstly of an introduction to the region under study, followed by six sections each dealing with a specific level of the educational system. Sections eight to ten cover research, prospects and summary statistics. These brief descriptions contain factual information presented in a readily accessible way. For detailed information and political discussions about language use at the various levels of education, the reader is referred to other sources.

1 Introduction to this issue

language

Swedish is one of the two official languages in Finland. The majority of the inhabitants in Finland are Finnish-speaking but a minority speaks Swedish as its first language. The number of bilingual families (one parent Finnish-speaking – the other parent Swedish-speaking) is increasing. The language belongs to the German language family and is one of the Nordic languages wich have very much in common. Swedish is understood in all Nordic countries, thus by about 20 million people.

The Swedish-speaking population in Finland can be traced back to medieval time when farmers colonized Finland from

Sweden. Finland was a part of Sweden for more than 600 years (until 1809). Therefore there were numerous contacts between the countries; many merchants, civil servants and military personnel moved from Sweden to Finland.

The Swedish language spoken in Finland has the same standard and the same norms as the Swedish spoken in Sweden. The language spoken by about 30-40% of the Finland-Swedes consists of different Swedish vernaculars. It is one of the five regional varieties of the Swedish language. Nevertheless, the norm for the Finland-Swedes is standard Swedish, which is the medium of instruction in the Swedish-language school. It is important for the Finland-Swedes that written Swedish in Finland does not differ from the written language in Sweden.

legislation

The constitution act from 1919 postulates that Finnish and Swedish are the two national languages of the country. In the constitution from 1922 the regulations regarding language use are specified in detail.

population

The total population in Finland is about 5.2 million people. The Swedish-speaking population numbers about 296,000 or 5.8% of the total population. In 1880 the Swedish-speaking population numbers 294,900 and formed then 14.3% of the total population in Finland. Because of the heavy increase of the Finnish-speaking population during our century, the Swedish speaking population - though it has remained almost the same in numbers - has decreased in proportion to about 5.8% (1993). This negative trend in the relative number of Swedish-speaking people in Finland can be partly explained by emigration – since 1950 about 60,000 Finland-Swedes have emigrated (mostly to Sweden) and is to a lesser degree caused by a language shift to Finnish. Since 1950 the netto of persons who have shifted from Swedish to Finnish is about 1,000.

About 50% of the Finland-Swedes are a majority in their municipalities and the other half live in municipalities where they form a minority. These live under strong influence from

Finnish. There is a small number of municipalities which are unilingual Swedish (in Ostrobothnia and Åboland). All municipalities on the Åland Islands are unilingually Swedish-speaking.

Åland Islands

Since 1921, the Åland province has been self-governing within the borders of Finland. It consists of the Åland archipelago, halfway between Sweden and Finland. This self-governing was decided by the United Nations and one of the main points was to guarantee the status of the Swedish language in the province. It gives Åland the right to issue laws and to handle administration in their own way, among other matters in respect of education and culture. The autonomy is firmly established in the consitution of Finland. The language of the country authorities is Swedish and all education is carried out in that language.

Åland is a part of the Finland-Swedish area. It is autonomous and ruled by a county council. The islands have about 25,000 inhabitants and have a form of regional citizenship: in order to buy real estate you have to have residence (*hemortsrätt).* The county authorities require a competence in Swedish to obtain domiciliary rights.

educational system

Compulsory schooling lasts from the child's seventh year of age to nine years later. Comprehensive schools have nine grades of which the first six can be considered as primary and grades 7-9 as lower secondary education. Comprehensive school is free of charge for the student.

The education system in the Swedish-speaking parts of Finland is not different from the system in the rest of Finland. The main characteristic of the organisation of the teaching at all levels for the Finland-Swedish population is the principle of "language shelter". Besides the Finnish school system a parallel school system exists in Swedish which will be referred to as Swedish schools. These schools have native speakers of Swedish as teachers and the language of the school is Swedish. The medium of instruction when teaching Finnish as foreign language in

such schools can be Swedish or Finnish (depending on the group of pupils). In Finnish-language schools Swedish is a compulsory subject, usually from grade seven till grade nine, taught during 2-3 lessons a week.

public and private

About 98% of the schools (all levels) are run publicly by the local authorities. Schools are funded by the state up to 60-70% of the costs. The rest of the cost is funded by the local authorities. The state regulates the school system through laws. Students do not pay fees at any level of the school system. Exceptions from this rule are some adult education institutions. In six very dominantly Finnish-speaking cities a so called "private" Swedish school exists. But this kind of school is financed in the same way as the public schools. A very few schools are actually private, run by organisations (one Steiner-school and one Montessori kindergarten).

administration

Central as well as local level authorities are involved in education. The *Ministry of Education* prepares the laws for the government. The primary, lower secondary and upper secondary school systems are regulated by laws dating from 1984. *The National Board of Education* is not generally normative, but the Board has a statutory right to decide upon evaluation and grading. Its task is to develop the educational system through different developmental projects and to work out the framework curriculum for the comprehensive school and for the upper secondary school (1994). For the preschool the framework curriculum dates from 1996.

Local authorities work through a *Council of Education*. In the Council the local curriculum for the different school levels is decided upon. By the reform of the national curriculum of 1994 the local educational councils were given a greater responsibility and have more freedom to decide upon the school programmes than before. Decisions concerning the control of the school quality standards are also taken locally.

support structure

In Finland no inspectorates exists although an advisory body functions through the National Board of Education. The Board gives advice to the Ministry of Education on educational policy. It has a separate Department for Swedish affairs (dealing with minority questions: the languages Swedish, Sami and Romani and education for returnees as well as that for refugees). The Board predominantly supports schools through the development of curriculum.

It also develops national educational measurements for different age-groups. A special council controls the national standard of grading when graduating from upper secondary school (*studentexamensnämnden*). The council formulates the extensive examinations for the graduating students. Their examination also serves as an admission test to university and higher vocational education.
The Swedish Assembly in Finland (*Svenska Finlands folkting*) functions as support for information about the Swedish population. There is also an organization of Swedish municipalities (*Svenska kommunförbundet*) for administering the local policy in Swedish-speaking areas. The Swedish-language culture foundation (*Svenska Kulturfonden*) gives grants for projects and research in the Swedish language and culture in Finland.

In the following sections the educational system for the Finland-Swedes is discussed per educational level.

2 Preschool education

target group

Day care institutions in Finland are regulated by the 1973 law of day care. The law obliges the local authorities to arrange day care according to the needs of the municipalities for children from 0,5 to 6 years of age. It underlines the importance of upbringing and caring more than that of teaching. Day care institutions are under the supervision of the Ministry of Welfare and the Board of Welfare (*socialstyrelsen*). These institutions are organised by the

local authorities. They are not free of charge, parents pay a fee according to their income. For six-year-old children there is a voluntary preschool-class either in the day care institution or in the primary school. There are some places when preschool education is organized within the primary school (the local authorities must apply for that at the Board of Education). Preschool is then integrated with grades 1 and 2. The framework curriculum for the preschool has been published by the Board of Education (1996).

statistics

In 1995 there were 2,190 day care centres in Finland. No statistics based on language can be given, but approximately 320 of these have groups for Swedish-speaking children. The National Research and Development Centre for Welfare and Health (STAKES) compiles and maintains national registers and gives information about day care. In 1995 125,031 children went to day care centres and 65,580 children were in family day care; 63% of all children in Finland (below compulsory school age) were in some kind of day care institution.
In 1997 about 60% of the six-year-olds had some kind of preschool education.

language use

Educational institutions are set up on the basis of the Swedish and Finnish languages. Some are bilingual with separate groups according to language background of the pupils. The kindergarten teacher is a native speaker of Swedish, but usually she is also fluent in Finnish. This is typical for the more urban bilingual areas in Finland, where the family often lives in a Finnish-speaking environment. Parents want their child to go to a Swedish day care group in order to give the child a chance to perfect its Swedish language competence when entering primary school.

immersion programmes

In 14 cities the possibility exists for the Finnish-speaking preschool children to take part in an immersion programme where the medium of instruction is Swedish. The target group consists of unilingually Finnish-speaking children, but the aim is that these children through the immersion programme will become functionally bilingual in Swedish

and Finnish. The idea of immersion was implemented in the Finnish-speaking school-system in Vasa 1987 and the first immersion pupils are now attending secondary school. All research in the immersion field is now carried out at Vaasa University.

instruction material

Instructional material from Sweden is available for the Swedish preschool institutions in Finland. There is also teaching material produced in Finland by publishers who use Swedish as their main publishing language (Editum/Schildts and Söderströms). The Faculty of Education at the Swedish university in Finland (Åbo Akademi University) also publishes pedagogic material for preschool teachers.

3 Primary education

target group

The primary school in Finland caters for pupils aged 7-12 (grade 1-6). In practice, lower secondary education is mostly referred to as classes 7-9 of comprehensive school.

legislation

The Act on Comprehensive School (1983) underlines the nature of a common basic education. It is a public school regulated by the law of general compulsory learning (*läroplikt*). Based on the framework curriculum for the comprehensive school, every school is supposed to form their own local curriculum.
In the framework curriculum from 1994 (for grades 1-9) the values on which to base the teaching are described according to United Nations Declaration of Human Rights (a continuous development, national cultural traditions as well as internationalism, moral and other values, health and welfare). The aims of the framework curriculum are valid for the whole territory of Finland. There is a great freedom of choice to decide on the content of the teaching and how a local school can be characterized. This means that recently there has been a change from a primary school focused on rules to a primary school focused on aims to achieve.

The school is of vital importance for the cultural identity of a small minority like the Swedish-speaking population in Finland.

statistics

In 1994 there were 22,135 pupils enrolled in the Finland-Swedish primary schools. The number of bilingual children in the Swedish schools is increasing rapidly in the nineties. It was 25% a few years ago, but in the cities in South Finland the percentage of bilingual children is some 90% in the Swedish schools. In the province of Nyland (around Helsinki) the degree of bilingual children in the Swedish primary school was 44% in 1993-94.
On the other hand there are many rural schools where almost none of the children know Finnish at all: they speak a Swedish vernacular. When they go to school they are supposed to learn standard Swedish.[3]
An interesting group is formed by the children from bilingual homes. In the 1970s, in the national registration of language for the children in bilingual families there were about 40% of the children registered as Swedish-speaking. In the 1990s about 60% of the children from these bilingual homes are registered as Swedish-speaking. In 1993 there were about 3,500 seven-year-old children with Swedish as their mother tongue, but the same year almost 4,000 children entered the Swedish primary school. (Some 40% of the children from bilingual homes attend Finnish schools and usually get no special support for their Swedish language.) In 1995 there were 3,893 pupils in grade one in the 241 Swedish primary schools. The number of teachers in the Swedish primary school was 1,077 in 1994-95.

In 1996 there were about 3,000 Finnish-speaking pupils in Swedish immersion programmes (from kindergarten to grade 9). In autumn 1997 the number of pupils within immersion programmes in Swedish is expected to be 5,000.

Swedish as subject

Swedish is studied as a mother tongue and the teaching of reading and writing is central in the first and second grades. Throughout the primary and lower secondary level Swedish is taught for 2-3 hours a week.

In Swedish primary school a "strenghtened mother tongue Swedish" course (*förstärkt modersmål*) is offered to pupils from bilingual homes where Finnish has been the dominant language and where the child is not quite fluent in Swedish. Weekly they get 2 more lessons in Swedish. Only a few schools give priority to this, and usually only in grades 1-2. Some 2% of the pupils in the Finland-Swedish primary school come from monolingual, Finnish-speaking, homes.

For pupils who have Finnish as their mother tongue Finnish is taught as a mother tongue (*modersmålsinriktad finska*). In the southern part of Finland every third Swedish primary school and every second lower secondary school offers this course (for 2 hours a week). The other pupils learn Finnish as their first foreign language (A-language). The teaching of Finnish as a subject starts in grade three (sometimes already in grade one). In the Finnish schools the pupils can choose to learn either Swedish or English as their first foreign language (A-language). Most pupils choose English from grade three and Swedish from grade seven. The learning of Swedish is obligatory for the Finnish-speaking pupils and the learning of Finnish as a foreign language is compulsory for the Swedish speaking pupils. Only in the Åland Islands the pupils choose Finnish (B-language) on a voluntary basis.

medium of instruction

In the Swedish schools the medium of instruction is Swedish except for the teaching of foreign language (then the medium of instruction often is the target language).

immersion programmes

For the immersion programme schools in Finland the medium of instruction is also Swedish for the first three years, then gradually the teaching partly is given in Finnish. In a few cases immersion programmes in English are used at Swedish schools. In one case a small scale Finnish immersion programme for Swedish children exists.

research

Research concerning the primary schools in the Finland-Swedish area is mainly located at the Faculty of Education at Åbo Akademi University, where teachers for the Swedish schools in Finland are trained.

teachers

Teachers are native speakers of Swedish. Primary school teachers at Swedish schools speak Swedish fluently. If a teacher with another mother tongue than Swedish wants to teach in the school he has to pass a Swedish language test. All teachers at primary school ought to have a master's degree including a minor in multi-subject studies (with basics in teaching of all subjects of the primary school curriculum). They are class teachers and teach most of the time in one class.

instruction material

The importance of linguistic awareness is stressed and some material to assist teachers is developed. Books used for teaching different subjects in Swedish are mainly produced in Finland. Many of the lecturers in didactics at the Swedish-language teacher education also produce books for different subjects.

special education

Some 22 Swedish-language institutions exist for special education for all levels (training schools for severely handicapped children, training-vocational schools and so on). The main trend is integration of special education pupils into mainstream education. If necessary, children are supported with an assistant to facilitate integration. Every primary and secondary school has a remedial teacher. Especially in the primary school the special needs teacher acts as a companion-teacher (speech-training, support for children with reading and writing difficulties).

4 Secondary education

Lower secondary education

structure

Grades 7-9 are currently considered as lower secondary school and are part of the obligatory school system. From 1997 the administrative barriers between primary and secondary education schools will be taken away. In grades 7-9 teachers are subject teachers. During these years a framework curriculum for the comprehensive school is

followed. Every lower secondary school plans a local curriculum. In this stage a study advisor acts as a central person who gives advice about studies beyond the obligatory school.

statistics

There are 38 Swedish lower secondary schools. The pupils from several primary schools go to one common secondary school. There are about 10,889 pupils enrolled in these schools (1993). There are about 1,000 subject teachers at lower and upper secondary schools.

Swedish as a subject

The teaching of Swedish as a subject is given for at least 2-3 hours weekly and the teaching concerns writing, reading of literature, oral communication skills and structure. In Finnish-language schools Swedish is taught as a foreign language for 2-3 lessons a week from grade seven (sometimes from grade three - if the pupils choose it).

medium of instruction

The lower secondary school is a Swedish-language school and Swedish is the medium of instruction. At lower secondary schools the same type of support for language learning can be given as at primary schools.

instruction material

The Swedish-language section of the Board of Education has developed national tests in mathematics, Finnish as a foreign language and in Swedish for grade nine. These tests are offered on a voluntary basis. Swedish-language publishers like Editum/Schildts and Söderströms produce teaching material for lower secondary schools. Also teaching materials imported from Sweden are widely used.

Upper secondary education

structure and legislation

The law for the upper secondary education (*gymnasium)* dates from 1992. In the law the goals for the senior secondary education are described. The *gymnasium* builds on the course of lower secondary education. Attainment targets and subject regulations are described in a decree from the Ministry of Education (1993). The Board of Education has

published the framework curriculum for upper secondary education (1994).

Upper secondary education normally takes 3 years (16-18/19 years). Students pass through the *gymnasium* at their own pace (from two till four years). It leads, after an extensive examination period, to a General Certificate of Education at Advanced Level (*studentexamen)* Recently this stage has developed away from fixed year groups into a flexible system with course studies. Every course has a duration of about 36 lessons. These lessons are given in a 6 week period. After that there is a new period with new subjects taught.

In addition to the obligatory courses the local school can offer voluntary, more in-depth, studies in Swedish (project work on a theme, Finland-Swedish questions, drama, theatre, literature, Nordic languages, functional grammar or oral communication).

statistics

There are 33 *gymnasiums* spread over the Finland-Swedish area. The number of students is 6,278. About 55% of a year group passes on to a *gymnasium*. Some schools give upper secondary education in the evenings. Students at evening *gymnasiums* are mainly adults. Subject teachers are often the same for secondary and upper secondary level (about 1,000 in the Swedish-language schools).

Swedish as a subject

The obligatory number of courses in Swedish as mother tongue is six: (1) language and communication, (2) creative text-producing, (3) text- and language structure, (4) Finland-Swedish and Nordic, (5) literature as a mirror of contemporary society and (6) language and literature as power factors.

In the *gymnasium* a course on strenghtened mother tongue Swedish for bilingual pupils aimed at bilingual pupils can be given. The aim of the course is to enable bilingual pupils to achieve the same profiency level in Swedish as the monolingual Swedish peers.

In Finnish-language upper secondary schools Swedish is taught as a subject (both A and B level courses). Swedish is described in the Finnish-language national curriculum (1994) as part of the students' general education. Swedish language profiency, it says, gives them a Nordic cultural capital and strengthens their cultural identity of which the bilingualism of the country forms part.

medium of instruction

The Swedish-language upper secondary schools are monolingual Swedish[4]. In two cases there are Swedish-language gymnasiums (in Vasa and in Helsinki) with one group of students getting their teaching (to a large extent) in English. This is called the *IB gymnasium*. The group in the IB programme in Vasa consists of 50% Swedish-speaking students and of 50% Finnish-speaking students.

Four of the Swedish-language *gymnasiums*, each one of them in dominantly Finnish-speaking cities, are called "private" or "substitutive" schools. Here the students use mostly Finnish as their language of communication outside school and when not talking to a teacher. In these schools the use of Swedish as the medium of instruction is stressed.

5 Vocational education

structure

There are some 52 Swedish-language basic vocational training schools. Usually they give courses from 1-3 years of duration. Vocational education normally follows lower secondary education. It is also possible to continue studying at a vocational school after graduating from upper secondary. The vocational schools at institute level are often a part of a polytechnic-type of school which gives higher professional education. (See under higher education).

statistics

In Swedish basic vocational schools there were 3,980 students enrolled in 1995-96.

language use

Swedish is used as the medium of instruction in the Swedish-

language vocational schools. In the bilingual institutions like business management school and hotel and restaurant management school the students get some subjects taught in Finnish and some in Swedish.

6 Higher education

structure

Higher education is in Finland given at polytechnic-type schools (*yrkeshögskola)* and at universities.

The major Swedish-language university is Åbo Akademi University. Another Swedish-language university level institution is the Swedish Business Management School and a third Swedish-language institution at university level is the School for Social Studies and Welfare at the University of Helsinki. Some other universities are bilingual and have some teaching of groups in Swedish: at the University of Helsinki, at the Technical University, the Theatre Academy, the Music Academy and at the University of Vaasa.

Åbo Akademi University has a special task in taking care of the needs of education and research among and for the Finland-Swedes: its Institute for Swedish sociological research in Finland functions and conducts constant demographical research on the Swedish-speaking population in Finland. One part of Åbo Akademi is located in Vasa under the name of the Ostrobothnian campus of Åbo Akademi (*Österbottens högskola*). A centre for research on and production of teaching materials for the Swedish-language schools (*Svenska läromedelscentret*) has recently been established at the Ostrobothnian campus.

From autumn 1996 there have been three Swedish-language polytechnic-type schools called AMK-institutions (*yrkeshögskola*). Three more AMK-institutions are bilingual and have Swedish as well as Finnish-language teaching groups or mixed groups. The programmes at the AMK-institutions include technical training, health, arts, youth-

work, business management, hotel and restaurant management. The characteristic feature of an AMK-institution is that the teaching is strictly directed towards higher vocational education (and not towards research). The qualification requirements for teachers at the AMK-institutions vary from a doctoral-degree or a licentiate to a masters degree.

The academic structure builds upon exams starting from bachelor's degree and master's degree. Further exams are licentiate and the doctor of science degree.

statistics

Undergraduate students at Åbo Akademi University numbered 3,594 in 1994, postgraduates 460. If the Open University of Åbo Akademi is taken into acount, the number of students is 5,288 (18-10-95). The Swedish-language Business Management university level school (*Svenska handels-högskolan*) had 1,642 undergraduate students in 1994 and 73 postgraduate students. The number of Swedish-language undergraduate students at the University of Helsinki was 1,822 (in 1994) and Swedish-language postgraduate students 151.

The AMK-institutions took in 700 Swedish-language students for the year 1996-97.

Finland has 21 universities (and a defence college). At the Faculties of Humanities study of the Swedish language is offered. In Åbo, Turku, Helsinki, Tampere and Vasa chairs for Swedish exist.

In 1994, among a total of 127,846 students at 21 universities in Finland 9,144 were registrated as Swedish-speaking students. (A few Swedish-speaking students are enrolled as students at the defence college (*försvarshögskolan*).

language use

As a rule, Åbo Akademi University requires native-like competence in Swedish from its students. Some 25% of the students are predominantly Finnish-speaking but have passed a test in Swedish, to make sure that these students can

study through the medium of Swedish. The academic teaching is given in Swedish from undergraduate to postgraduate level.

In the bilingual universities of Helsinki and Vaasa teaching is carried out in both Swedish and Finnish. At the university of Vaasa translators (Finnish-Swedish) are trained.

The summer universities and the Open University work in close contact with the Swedish and bilingual universities and teach also distance courses at university level.

Swedish as a subject is taught in all the Swedish-language vocational schools and AMK-institutions.

teacher education

Teacher training is provided by universities at their Faculty of Education. Swedish-speaking teachers get their training from the Faculty of Education at Åbo Akademi University. Since 1974 the Faculty has been located in Vasa in Ostrobothnia as an integral part of the Ostrobothnian campus of Åbo Akademi University. The main reason for locating the Faculty in Vaasa is that the region is to a great extent Swedish-speaking and can thus provide easy access to Swedish-language schools and classes for the student teachers.

The Department of Teacher Education in Vaasa maintains close contact with all Swedish-language regions of Finland, being sensitive to the number of teachers required and providing courses and research in most of the various fields of specialisation offered by the Finnish-language teacher education departments.

Contemporary teacher training in Finland is the result of almost thirty years of intensive development. Teacher training for primary education was transferred to universities in 1974. A decree dating from 1979 states that the qualifications for primary school teaching and for subject teaching at lower and upper secondary levels are to be of

equal status. All comprehensive school teachers take a master's degree.

The flexibility of teacher education has been increased by a decree from 1995, according to which training obtained in one sector of teacher training gives a general qualification for teaching. In the new degree act on education (valid since August 1995) the earlier strict boundary between class teacher degrees and subject teacher degrees is eliminated also at the level of their training. From August 1995 the kindergarten teacher training has been carried out at the Faculty of Education with a degree at bachelor's level.

The Swedish kindergarten teacher education is located to Jakobstad in Ostrobothnia and is a part of the Department of Teacher Education at Åbo Akademi University. Subject teachers for the Swedish schools take their one year of pedagogical studies in Vasa. Likewise special education teachers and sloyd teachers (crafts) have a master's programme in Vasa. At the Finland-Swedish Faculty of Education a complete academic programme from initial teacher training to postgraduate studies in educational sciences is offered.

The undergraduate training of teachers at Åbo Akademi University is primarily devoted to the needs of the Swedish-speaking population in Finland. It has been clear from the beginning that the Faculty of Education should have the responsibility for the pedagogical part of all kinds of Swedish-language teacher education in Finland and thus function to safeguard the vitality of minority culture in Finland.

statistics

At the Faculty of Education of Åbo Akademi University about 700 students are enrolled. Every year about 60-80 students graduate with a master's degree in educational sciences and are qualified for either class teacher, special education teacher or as teachers of craft (sloyd) jobs. In spring 1996 the first 45 kindergarten teachers with a bachelor's degree graduated from the faculty. Four to five

persons yearly take a licentiate grade in educational science, and approximately two persons a year obtain a doctoral degree in educational sciences.

To some extent study for upper secondary teacher competence for the Swedish school can also be obtained at the University of Helsinki. The studies in didactics in Helsinki are mainly given in Finnish but training periods are at Swedish schools. Some students take their master's degree at a Finnish university and then they take a test in Swedish (native-like profiency is required) to gain qualification for teaching Swedish schools.

7 Adult education

structure

Adult education is given in special centres, which provide a large number of different courses, many of them as leisure time interests such as arts education and language courses. Some of the centres give vocational courses for the unemployed. The Swedish-language association for adult studies organizes distance studies.

Of a special interest for the minority culture are the "folk-highschools" where young people usually study for a year or two in order to get a deeper understanding of a special interest field. This kind of school is supposed to be "a school for life". The development of these schools is towards short time courses for different age groups.

statistics

Adult education in Swedish is given in 30 civic institutes (*medborgar- och arbetarinstitut*), one correspondence institute (*brevinstitut*), 3 centres for adult education, 2 upper secondary schools, 10 in-service centres at universities and colleges. There are 3 Swedish-language summer universities. Furthermore there are two study centres, which plan and carry out vocational courses for unemployed and for refugees. Most of the vocational schools also serve as centres

for adult education. Many of the adult education institutes listed above are bilingual.

In Finland there are 91 folk high-schools, out of which 17 are Swedish-language ones. In 1995 40,821 studentweeks were given at Swedish folk high-schools.

language use

The Swedish-language adult education institutes are gradually becoming more bilingual and offering subject studies in Swedish and in Finnish. The students often come from both language groups. A visible minority of the students are refugees.

Swedish courses

Swedish as a subject is offered in Swedish-language as well as Finnish-language adult education institutes.

8 Educational research

For decades already the situation of the Finland-Swedish inhabitants has been studied and researchers have described their language behavior. Today, extensive research in the field of education can be found. Research is located at universities and especially at the Faculty of Education (Åbo Akademi University). Some of the emphasis has been laid on problems concerning language and identity.

A large scale project at the Department of Teacher Education is centered around 'Children, language and communcation' (Brink & Ericsson 1997; Heilä-Ylikallio 1994; Slotte-Lüttge 1996; Østern 1994, 1996). The relationship to the majority language has been explored through research in bilingualism and education (Geber 1991; Gripenberg 1986, 1994; Grönholm 1993,1995; Herberts & Högnäs-Sandström 1990; Knubb-Manninen 1992; Laurén 1994; Löfström 1995; Sundman 1994; Visapää 1996; Østern 1991).

Finland-Swedish culture and identity are central issues in the research. The Institute for Swedish Sociological Research in

Finland provides other researchers and the authorities with recent demographic data about the Finland-Swedish population, about attitudes and changes in attitudes among the minority and majority population (Finnäs 1991, 1996; Nyman-Kurkiala 1997). The study of language shift and language loss is another theme of vital interest (Tandefelt 1988, 1996).

special education

The field of special education is also being investigated. The Board of Education supports research about evaluation of learning in schools (Björkqvist, 1992; Grönholm, 1995; Østern, 1994). Some comparative studies concerning learning nationally and internationally have attracted great interest (Brunell 1995; Brunell et al. 1996). The immersion programmes are continuously studied by researchers at Vaasa university (Björklund 1996; Buss & Kantonen 1997; Mård, in print). Nordic research networks are important for the Finland-Swedish educational research.

9 Prospects

The Finland-Swedish population is, compared to other language minorities, a strong group in Finnish society, partly due to the law that protects the language. Another reason is the deep historical roots for Swedish in Finland and a wealth of institutions catering for their needs.

A key issue for the Finland-Swedish minority is the choice of language registration in bilingual families and above all their choice of school language for their children.The quality of the education given in Swedish-language schools decides the future of the Swedish minority as a language group. As described above the quality of the educational system is high and can contribute to a high self esteem among the Swedish population.The challenges for the Swedish-language school are among others how to handle the language heterogeneity among the pupils and how to transform itself to meet the expectations from a society in rapid change. Areas of future

strength can also be found in the field of international co-operation, in the use of multimedia and parallel forms of instruction.

10 Summary statistics

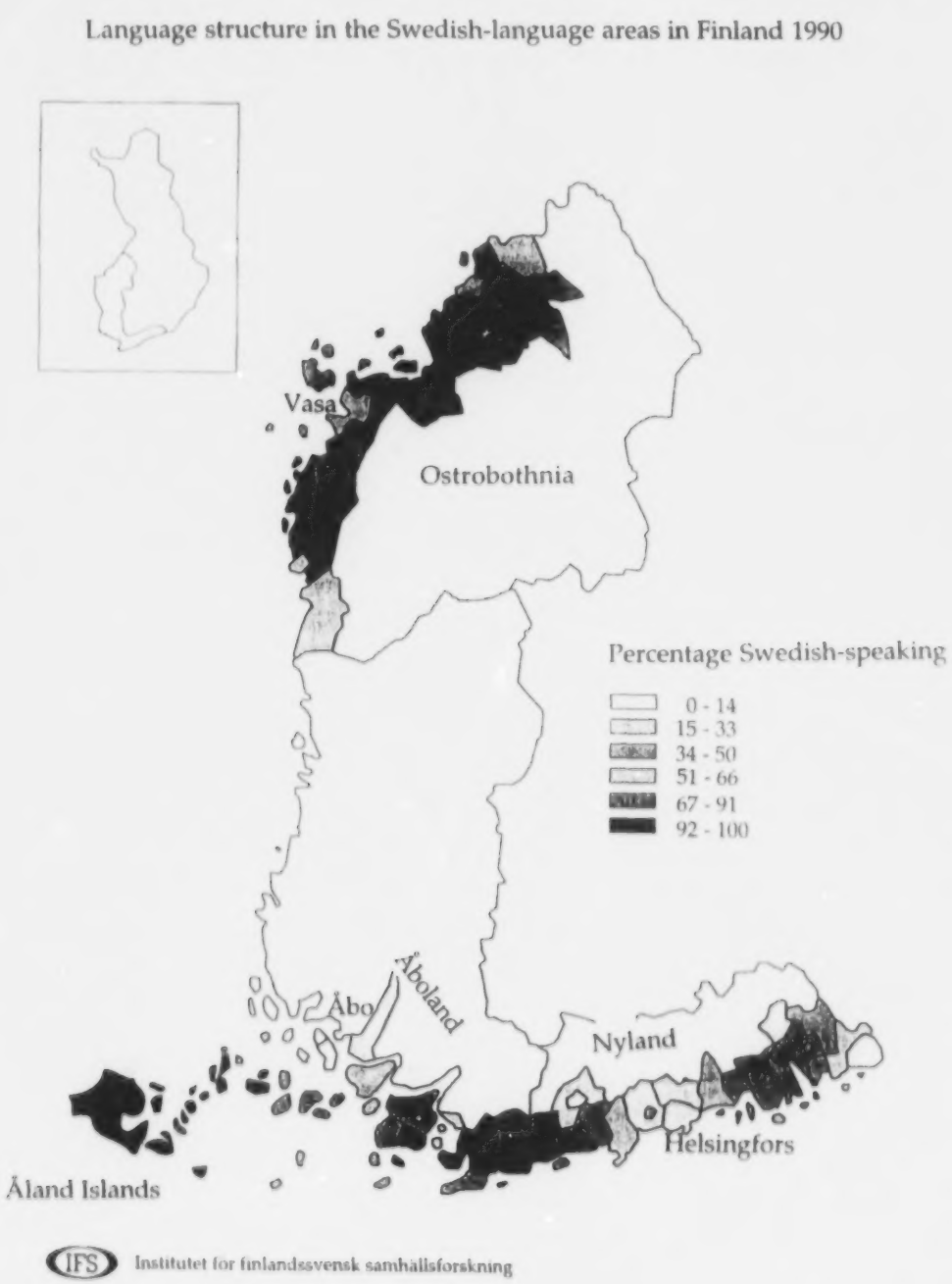
Type of education	Number of establishments	Enrolment
Day care/kindergarten	appr. 320	
Preschool in school	225	
Primary (grade 1-6)	251	22,135
Lower Secondary (grade 7-9)	(1[6] +) 37	10,889
Special	22	
Upper secondary (grade 10-12)	33	6,278
Adult education[5] (Swedish-language and bilingual)	51	
Vocational institute	52	
Non-university vocational college	3+3	700
University (Swedish)	2	5,184
University (bilingual or having Finland-Swedish-students enrolled)	20	3,960

Table 1: Swedish schools in Finland (1993 or later)

Type of education	Number of establishments	Enrolment
Day care institutions	16	978
Primary (grade 1-6)[7]	24	1,835
Secondary (grade 7-9)	4	914
Upper secondary (grade 10-12)	1	367
Adult education	3	3,520
Vocational school/institute[8]	7	695

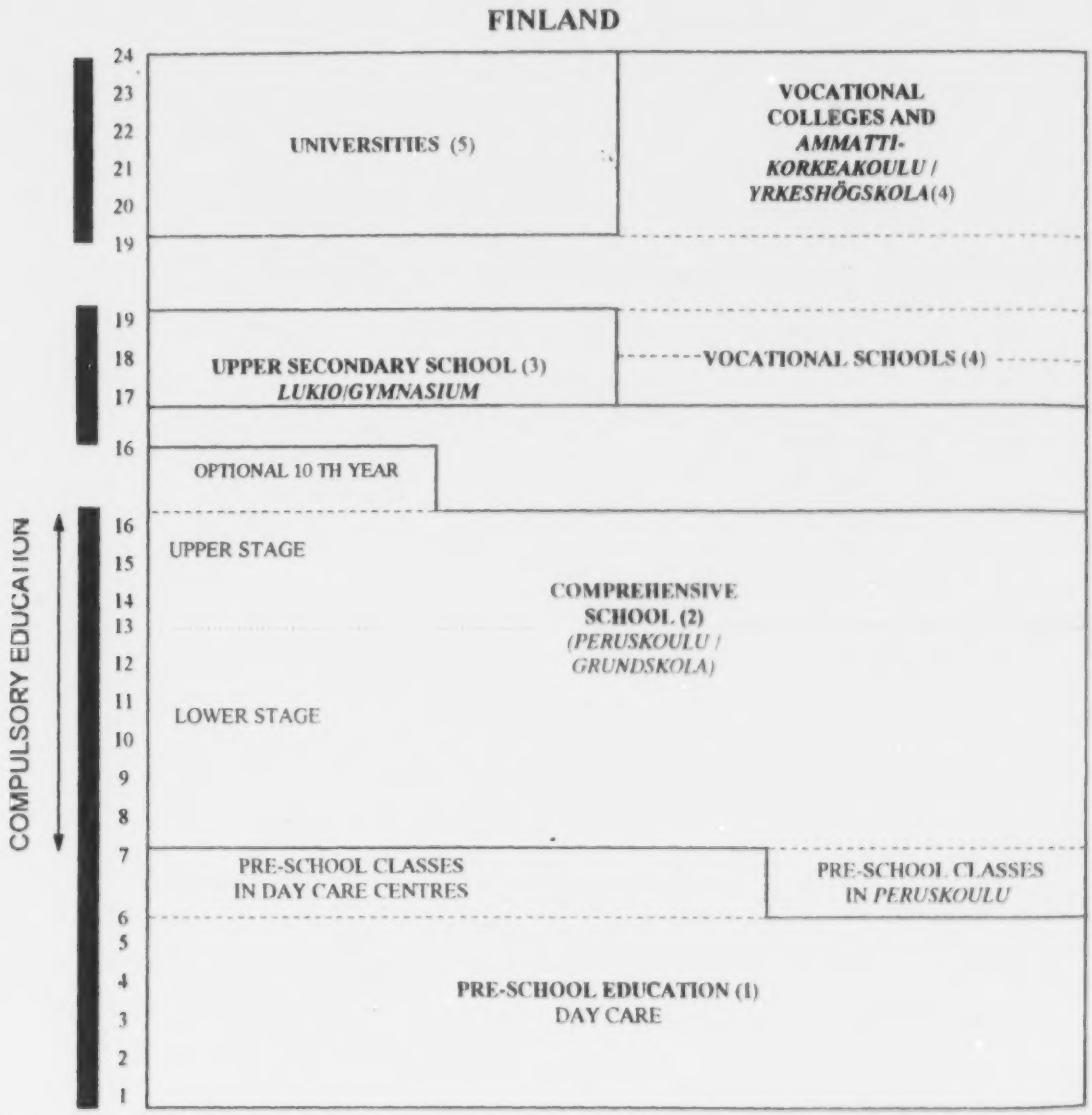
Table 2: The Åland Islands (1995 or later)

map: Language structure in the Swedish-language areas in Finland 1990



source: Institutet för finlandssvensk samhällsforskning [Institute for Swedish Sociological Research in Finland]

Educational system in Finland, from: *Structures of the Education*



1. The main forms of day care are the kindergarten/day care centres (*Päiväkoti/Daghem*) for children up to the age of 6, and family day care. 6- to 7-year-olds can follow pre-school education in day care centres or in comprehensive schools.
2. *Peruskoulu*, the comprehensive school, lasts nine years, but can also provide pre-school education for six-year-olds and an optional tenth year for those who have completed their compulsory education.
3. *Lukio*, the upper secondary school, provides three years of general education leading to the national matriculation examination.
4. Basic vocational training (2-3 years) is given in multidisciplinary or specialized vocational schools. Higher vocational education (3-5 years) is usually given at specialized colleges which can be entered either after comprehensive school or (usually) after completed secondary level studies. Apprenticeship is provided as an alternative route to these qualifications. *Ammattikorkeakoulu* is a new *Fachhochschule*-type institution of higher vocational education whose 3- to 4- year programmes lead to an academic degree.
5. The basic university degree (Master's degree) consists of three stages and takes 5-6 years to complete.

— = division in the level/type of education

- - - - - = alternative beginning or end of level / type of education

Notes

1. Source: European charter for regional or minority languages. Strasbourg: Council of Europe. November 1992. European Treaty Series/Série des traités européens 148

2. This document called "*Structures of the education and initial training systems in the European Union*" has been prepared jointly by EURYDICE and CEDEFOP.
   Address: EURYDICE European Unit, Rue d'Arlon 15, 1050 Brussels, Belgium.
   Tel.: +32-2-238 3011; Fax. +32-2-230 6562. Website: (also in French)
   http://europa.eu.int/en/comm/dg22/euryen.html

3. In Table 1 the number of children enrolled in grade 1 in Swedish-language schools is shown.

4. Only in two cases there are Swedish-language gymnasia (in Vaasa and Helsinki) with one group of students getting their teaching (to a large extent) in English. This is called the *IB gymnasium*. The group in the IB programme consists of 50% Swedish-speaking students and of 50% Finnish-speaking ones.

5. Adult education institutions do not often have students for a long period. Therefore it is difficult to provide statistics.

6. The Steiner secondary school

7. 3 schools included in these numbers consist of grades 1-9

8. 2 of the schools are at an institute level (240 students). The summer university of Åland/the college of Åland (*Ålands högskola*) arranged academic course for 1,764 students in 1995.

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